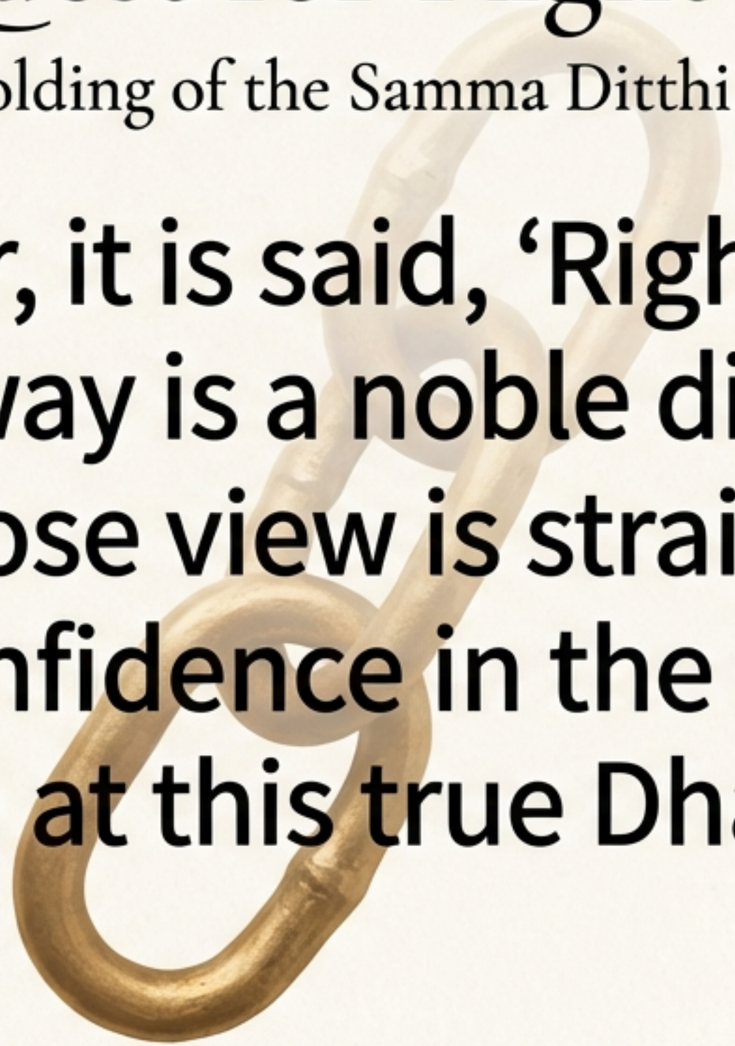
The Quest for Right View

An Unfolding of the Samma Ditthi Sutta

> “Venerable sir, it is said, ‘Right View, Right View.’ In what way is a noble disciple one of Right View, whose view is straight, who has unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma?”



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A Dialogue on Ultimate Truth

In the Blessed One’s presence at Savatthi, the Venerable Sariputta was asked this fundamental question by a group of monks. His response unfolds as a masterclass in seeing reality as it is. He offers not one, but sixteen progressive ways to understand Right View, each built upon a consistent, logical framework.

This presentation follows that journey.

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The Foundation: Understanding the Wholesome and the Unwholesome

The Unwholesome (Akusala)

Killing, Stealing, Sexual Misconduct, Lying, Slander, Harsh Speech, Idle Chatter, Covetousness, Ill Will, Wrong View.

The Wholesome (Kusala)

Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc., and culminating in Right View.

The Root of the Unwholesome

Greed (Lobha), Aversion (Dosa), Delusion (Moha).

The Root of the Wholesome

Non-greed (Alobha), Non-aversion (Adosa), Non-delusion (Amoha).

When a noble disciple understands the Unwholesome and its root, and the Wholesome and its root... in that way they are one of Right View.

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The Inquiry Deepens: “Is there another way?”

The monks, satisfied but eager for more, ask the pivotal question. Sariputta responds by introducing a new framework: Nutriment (Ahara).

1. The Phenomenon

The four nutriments that sustain beings: Physical food (coarse or fine), Contact (Phassa), Mental Volition (Manosancetana), Consciousness (Vinnana).

2. The Origin

Nutriment arises from Craving (Tanha).

3. The Cessation

With the cessation of Craving, Nutriment ceases.

4. The Path to Cessation

The Noble Eightfold Path.

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Right View as Seeing the Four Noble Truths

1. The Truth of Suffering (Dukkha)

Birth, aging, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair; not getting what one wants. In short: the five clinging-aggregates.

2. The Truth of the Origin (Samudaya)

The craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust—craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for non-existence.

3. The Truth of Cessation (Nirodha)

The complete fading away and cessation of that same craving.

4. The Truth of the Path (Magga)

The Noble Eightfold Path.

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The Great Unraveling: Tracing Suffering to Its Source

Again, the monks ask: “Venerable sir, is there another way?”
Sariputta now embarks on a profound reverse-engineering of existence itself. He takes the most tangible aspect of suffering—Aging and **Death**—and traces its causes backward, link by link, revealing the full chain of Dependent Origination.

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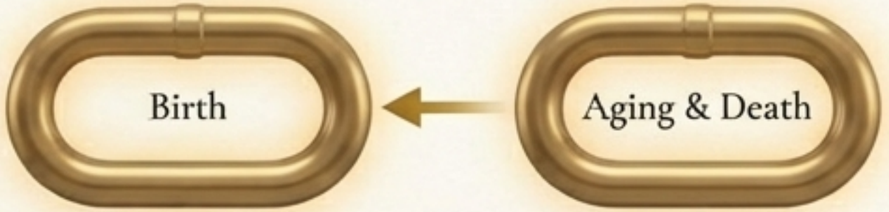
The Chain of Causality: From Aging & Death to Birth



12. Aging & Death (*Jaramarana*)

Definition: Decaying, decrepitude, brokenness, graying hair, wrinkled skin, decline of life, weakening of faculties. The breakup and vanishing of beings, death, the laying down of the body.

Origin: Arises from Birth (Jati).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Birth.

11. Birth (*Jati*)

Definition: The birth of beings into their various orders, their coming-to-be, the manifestation of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense bases.

Origin: Arises from Becoming (Bhava).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Becoming.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of both.

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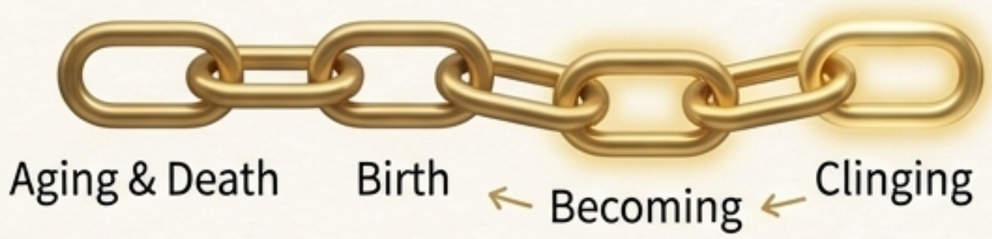
The Momentum of Existence: From Becoming to Clinging



10. Becoming (Bhava)

Definition: Three types of existence: Sense-Sphere Becoming, Fine-Material-Sphere Becoming, and Immaterial-Sphere Becoming.

Origin: Arises from Clinging (Upadana).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Clinging.

9. Clinging (Upadana)

Definition: Four types of clinging: Clinging to sensual pleasures, to views, to rites and rituals, and to a doctrine of self.

Origin: Arises from Craving (Tanha).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Craving.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of both.

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The Engine of Thirst: From Craving to Contact

8. Craving (Tanha)

Definition: Six classes of craving: Craving for forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental objects.

Origin: Arises from Feeling (Vedana).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Feeling.

7. Feeling (Vedana)

Definition: Six classes of feeling: Feeling born of eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and mind-contact.

Origin: Arises from Contact (Phassa).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Contact.

6. Contact (Phassa)

Definition: Six classes of contact: Eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and mind-contact.

Origin: Arises from the Six Sense Bases.

Cessation: Ceases with cessation of the Six Sense Bases.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of all three.

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The Gates of Experience: From Contact to Name-and-Form

... ← [Name-and-Form] ← [Six Sense Bases] ← [Contact] ← ...

6. Contact (Phassa)

- **Definition**: Six classes of contact: Eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and mind-contact.
- **Origin:** Arises from the Six Sense Bases (Salayatana).
- **Cessation:** Ceases with the cessation of the Six Sense Bases.

5. The Six Sense Bases (Salayatana)

- **Definition**: The eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and mind-base.
- **Origin:** Arises from Name-and-Form (Namarupa).
- **Cessation:** Ceases with the cessation of Name-and-Form.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of both.

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The Psycho-Physical Unit: From Name-and-Form to Formations

… <-- [Formations] <-- [Consciousness] <-- [Name-and-Form] <-- …

4. Name-and-Form (Namarupa)

Name: Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention.
Form: The four great elements and the form derived from them.

Origin: Arises from Consciousness (Vinnana).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Consciousness.

3. Consciousness (Vinnana)

Six classes of consciousness: Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.

Origin: Arises from Formations (Sankhara).

Cessation: Ceases with the cessation of Formations.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of both.

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The Root of All: From Formations to Ignorance

[Ignorance] ← [Formations] ← [Consciousness] ← ...

2. Formations (*Sankhara*)

- **Definition:** Three kinds of formations: Bodily formation (in-and-out breathing), verbal formation (thought & examination), mental formation (perception & feeling).
- **Origin:** Arises from Ignorance (Avijja).
- **Cessation:** Ceases with the cessation of Ignorance.

1. Ignorance (*Avijja*)

- **Definition:** Not knowing suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- **Origin:** Arises from the Taints (Asava).
- **Cessation:** Ceases with the cessation of the Taints.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of both.

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The Final Insight: The Taints that Fuel Ignorance

The Phenomenon: The Taints (Asava)

Three taints: The taint of sensual desire (kamasava), the taint of existence (bhavasava), and the taint of ignorance (avijjasava).

The Origin:

Arise from Ignorance.

The Cessation:

With the cessation of Ignorance, the Taints cease.

The Path to Cessation:

The Noble Eightfold Path

“When a noble disciple has understood the taints, their origin, their cessation, and the path… they have uprooted the underlying tendency to the conceit ‘I am,’ and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge, they make an end of suffering here and now.”

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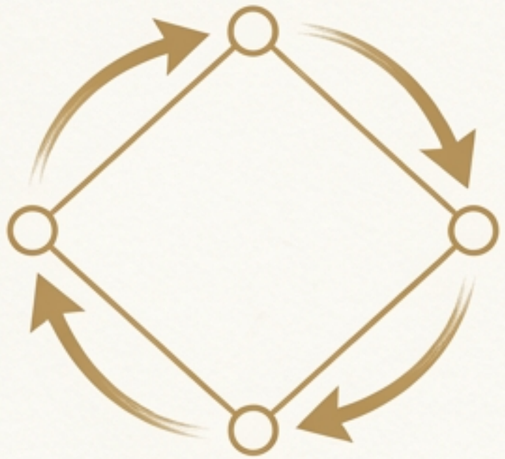
The Unifying Pattern of Right View

Across sixteen distinct subjects—from basic ethics to the profound chain of causation—Sariputta's explanation of Right View follows a single, powerful pattern. True understanding is never just knowing what something is. It is a fourfold knowledge:

1. Understanding the Phenomenon itself.



2. Understanding its Origin.

3. Understanding its Cessation.

4. Understanding the Path leading to its Cessation.

At every level, the path to cessation is constant: **The Noble Eightfold Path**.

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The Architecture of Existence: The Full Chain of Dependent Origination

To see this chain is to see the truth of suffering and its origin. To understand its cessation is Right View. This is the heart of the Samma Ditthi Sutta: a complete, actionable map for the end of suffering.

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